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SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—" May I know whether the Government had taken any steps against the paper which has published such a report without basis? "

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—" I wish we had some power to curb such mischievous papers."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" Sir, the article in question was published on the 5th November. Is it not fair in the interests of the officer concerned, that the Government should have issued a Press Communique, without waiting till this question was put and answered on the floor of the House, as such scandals gain strength when they are not contradicted in time? "

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—" We do not think it worthwhile to contradict all scandals published in that particular paper."

Radium needles used in the Barnard Institute of Radiology.

* 60 *Q.*—SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO : Will the Hon. the Minister for Public Health be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Government ordered a special enquiry into the working of the Government General Hospital, Madras, last year;

(*b*) whether the working of the Barnard Institute of Radiology formed part of the enquiry;

(*c*) whether the findings of the enquiry were embodied in a Press Note and issued sometime ago, and if so, what the Press Note is;

(*d*) whether the quantity of Radium needles used in the Barnard Institute of Radiology formed the subject of the enquiry, and if so, what the findings are in this regard;

(*e*) whether all or any of the Radium needles used or ordered were found to be of sub-medium quality;

(*f*) whether it is a fact that the use of sub-medium quality needles is injurious, and if so, whether their use has been stopped;

(*g*) what steps have been taken to replace the sub-medium quality needles by needles of the standard quality?

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" (*a*) In 1948 the Hon. Minister Dr. T. S. S. Rajan was requested by the Hon. the Premier to enquire into certain complaints received about the working of the hospital.

" (*b*) Yes.

" (*c*) Yes; copies of the Press Notes [a] issued in that connexion are laid on the table.

" (*d*) No.

" (*e*) The needles ordered recently from America have been tested for the even distribution of Radium Sulphate inside them. Two hundred and eighty-six needles out of 315 received from the American Company are not up to the specifications stipulated in the contract.

[a] Printed as Appendix IV on pages 676–677 infra.

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"(*f*) It was reported to Government that the use of the American needles had not been found to be injurious. Out of a total of 604 patients treated in the General Hospital since January 1948—the month of issue of these American needles, 223 patients had been treated exclusively by the new American needles, 236 patients had been treated exclusively by the old English needles and 145 patients had been treated by a combination of both the American and English needles.

"Though the clinical results obtained in respect of these different groups of patients had been reported to be similar and the clinical use of the American needles had been reported to be not injurious, in view however of the opinion of eminent physicists in India and England against the use of these needles on the basis of the autophotographs seen by them, the Government have ordered the withdrawal of these needles from use, pending examination by the Superintendent, and one or two experts, of the question whether it would be wise to use the needles, before they have been rectified.

"(*g*) Every possible step has been taken to replace these needles by correctly filled ones. As a test whether the company would be able to meet the requirements of the Director of Barnard Institute of Radiology, six needles have been sent by him to the company in the first instance for such rectification. If these remade needles conform to the standard demanded by the Director, the other 280 needles will be sent for such remaking or else the whole stock of 315 needles purchased would be sent back to the company and the entire amount paid for the needles will be claimed back."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO:—"If the use of these needles did not produce any ill effects, why should the Government withdraw the needles from use and thus deprive the patients of their benefit?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN:—"The treatment has been continued where we have got stocks which we can use. The question of using these needles is with regard to the particular cases of treatment. So long as we have stocks of these, we are using them. Therefore the question of depriving the patients does not arise."

11-30 a.m. SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO:—"May I know, Sir, whether the existing stock of needles is sufficient to treat the large number of cases especially in the Cancer Department?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN:—"Yes, Sir, we have been successfully treating the cases with the present stock."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO:—"May I know, Sir, whether the Surgeon-General has at any time pointed out the desirability of withdrawing these needles even though there were no ill-effects from their use?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN:—"Whenever any defects are noticed, it follows that they must be rectified. The Surgeon-General has done that."

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SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" So long as the clinical effects of these needles are the same as those of good ones, will not the withdrawal of the needles unnecessarily put the patients to the necessity of waiting for their turn for treatment, even when needles are available? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" The clinical results have been found to be satisfactory and the needles were not defective as such. But the defect was found in the distribution of radium-sulphate in those needles in the possession of the Government. These will be sent back for rectification if that is reported to be possible by the firm."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" The Hon. the Minister has said that some eminent physicists were consulted before the withdrawal of these needles was ordered. May I know, Sir, whether the opinions given by these physicists were in favour of withdrawal of the needles? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" I am sorry, Sir, there is a wrong conception about these experiments. The Superintendents of the General Hospital and Stanley Hospital and an expert from outside this Province have been constituted into a Committee and the Committee has been asked to examine the needles in the possession of the Government and to see whether they can be used or should be withdrawn. It has not yet reported. Meanwhile, treatment cannot be held over and therefore we are continuing treatment with such needles as are available and good."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" In view of the fact, Sir, that there are no ill-effects, will the Government at least tentatively continue the treatment with the help of the American needles also? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" When once it has been found to be defective, it is not fair to use the needles unless we are satisfied otherwise."

[*Note*.—An asterisk (*) at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the Member.]

II.—MESSAGES FROM THE ASSEMBLY.

THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT :—" I have to announce to the House the following messages received from the Hon. the Speaker of the Madras Legislative Assembly transmitting copies of the following Bills as passed by the Assembly in accordance with Rule 94 of the Madras Assembly Rules :—

(1) *On 23rd November* 1949—

The Madras Buildings (*Lease and Rent Control*) *Bill*, 1949 (*L.A. Bill No*. 26 *of* 1949).

The Madras Prohibition (*Amendment*) *Bill*, 1949 (*L.A. Bill No*. 27 *of* 1949).

The Madras Drugs (*Control*) *Bill*, 1949, (*L.A. Bill No*. 28 *of* 1949).